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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

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*Theodor Fontane: A Critical Study.* By KENNETH HAYENS. London: W. Collins & Co., 1920.

The technical side of novel-writing has elicited in recent years an uncommon amount of scholarly interest. A bibliography of essays, largely doctoral dissertations from German universities, which deal with the more technical aspects of the novelist's craft, has swelled to considerable proportions. Many of these essays bear, as far as general method and use of terminology are concerned, a recognizable relationship to Robert Riemann's *Goethes Romantechnik* (1902). Studies, more or less technical, in the art of fiction or the methods of individual novelists were, of course, available previous to the publication of Riemann's work, such as Spielhagen's *Beiträge zur Theorie und Technik des Romans* (1883), and indeed by 1915 in such numbers as to justify M. L. Wolff in writing a history of the theory of the novel (*Geschichte der Romantheorie*), but in providing a systematic method of investigation, a classification of the various elements of technique in a form at once graspable and generally applicable, Riemann appears much in the light of a pioneer. Obviously the novel can never be reduced to so compact a formula as that which Freytag with some plausibility derived from his study of the drama, yet the detailed studies of *Romantechnik* may eventually afford the possibility of a synthesis of general principles as to the craft of the novelist which, substantially attested and documented, may be of very great value. A recent addition to the studies of the German novel, to a large extent on the technical side, is Kenneth Hayens's *Theodor Fontane: A Critical Study* (London, 1920)—Hayens is Lecturer in German Language and Literature at University College, Dundee.

Hayens's prefatory note contains his bibliography. A selected bibliography is open to criticism both for inclusions and omissions, and satisfies perhaps no one except the compiler. Hayens' bibliography contains only ten items; several of them are references to such general and obvious authorities as the histories of literature by Meyer, Stern, and Biese, or Mielke's *Der deutsche Roman*; he uses one item to condemn Pineau's *L'Évolution du Roman en Allemagne au XIXe Siècle* as valueless for the study of Fontane, and at the end he notes several magazine articles which he characterizes mildly as "not unsuggestive." The student of Fontane would doubtless recommend various substitutions or additions, such as, perhaps, the essays of Ettlinger (Berlin, 1904) and F. Servaes (Berlin, without date). In view of the fact that Hayens is so largely concerned with the technique of Fontane's stories, one misses a reference to Krickner's study in the Bonner

Forschungen: *Theodor Fontane, von seiner Art und epischen Kunst* (1912), in which Krieger has trodden some kindred pathways before Hayens and brings forward a good deal of highly interesting material. Perhaps the most conspicuous omission is that of Dresch's book *Le Roman Social en Allemagne 1850-1900* (Paris, 1903), which devoted 128 pages to Fontane, the most extended account of Fontane's novels before Wandrey's *Theodor Fontane* (München, 1919); the latter probably appeared too late for Hayens to include.

Despite the inclusive promise of the title, Hayens's study deals only with Fontane as a novelist; in a brief introduction he compresses into the space of six pages a biography of Fontane and a survey, hardly more than an enumeration, of his non-fictional work. Because of this brevity, he fails to give appropriate emphasis to various avenues of approach to Fontane's real career, for example, his apprenticeship to narrative writing in his ballads. For the practical purpose of chapter divisions Hayens is naturally obliged to abandon Meyer's simple classification of the novels under two heads, "criminal novels" and "modern novels" (experimentelle, sozial-psychologische, kulturhistorische), and considers the stories under the following headings: "The Historical Novelist," "The Story-teller," "The New World," "Berlin Plutocracy," "Unequal Marriages," "Sentiment and Society," "Poor Nobility," "A Liberal Conservative." This grouping of the novels which violates the chronological sequence of their publication would be the natural procedure, were Hayens concerned exclusively with the themes of the stories and not with their technique, but this plan is likely to lead to some confusion in those passages where Hayens calls attention to the development of Fontane's technical methods; for example, in the chapter "The Historical Novelist" Hayens frequently compares *Schach von Wuthenow* with *Vor dem Sturm*, not simply as historical novels but in matters of technique, ignoring the fact that three novels were published between these two; unless the reader holds the chronological table in mind, he will probably gain the impression that *Schach von Wuthenow* was Fontane's second novel. In general Hayens shows a tendency to limit his comparisons to the group of stories which he considers in an individual chapter. It may be questioned also whether the unimportant novel *Quitt* deserves a chapter for itself, a doubt which is scarcely met by Hayens's plea that an author's failures merit study as well as his successes or that the book deserves special notice because of the novelty of the American scenes.

In his analysis of Fontane's novels Hayens tests each story on a series of points which he has chosen as constituting the technique of novel-writing; his method is simple and generally sound. He gives a brief outline of the plot which will serve for those who have never read the novels as an accurate indication of the kind of *story* which Fontane was wont to tell. Then the investigator analyzes each of the more important characters, and devotes a few words of comment to the minor personages; and by reference to

interpretative parallels and contrasts he opens the way for the establishment of general principles as to Fontane's favorite types and the strata of society from which his people are taken. He discusses also the various settings used in the stories, whether both outdoor and indoor scenes are used and in what relative proportions, and he compares one novel with others in this regard. Hayens fails to note Fontane's peculiar fondness for naming the pictures on the walls of his indoor settings; in this practice Fontane doubtless approaches the milieu-theorists and he probably derived from them an unconscious sense of the importance of this element in the setting.

Each novel is tested under the heading "proportion"; this consists in a quantitative measurement of the amount of recorded conversation as compared with the space devoted to action or reflective comment. Thus he says of *L'Adultera* (p. 131): "The general proportion of the novel is destroyed by the complete overshadowing of the action by the speech,"—a statement which Hayens makes in varying form in nearly every chapter of his book, though he fails to develop a theory as to the appropriate proportion of these elements. As a matter of fact this preponderance of conversation is the keynote of Fontane's realism; as in "real life," Fontane acquaints us with his people largely through what they say and what others say of them, and he is loath to assume the omniscience of the novelist who tells us what goes on behind the spoken word. In comment on the conversation as such, Hayens is sensible and acute in opposing the views frequently expressed to the effect that all of Fontane's characters talk alike without differentiation of speech, save for the few who, not always consistently, use dialect.

Hayens examines the different novels as to the number of characters in the different scenes and establishes Fontane's preference for scenes with only two persons or for considerably larger groups, his dislike of scenes with three or four persons. Discussion is also applied to Fontane's use of inserted letters, a practice which is with him more frequent than in the average modern novel, to the introduction of "extraneous matter," a point upon which a more precise definition of the term would seem to be required, the use of inserted poems, to passages where the author seems to take the reader into his confidence, and to the employment of foreign words; the latter are weighed quantitatively in each book, though Hayens does not indicate whether or not he has used Albin Schultz's dissertation *Das Fremdwort bei Theodor Fontane* (Greifswald, 1913). A further subject for discussion is the choice of title and of the names chosen for the characters. Hayens comments on the connotation or suggestiveness of names with considerable sensitiveness, but one wonders why he dismisses *Stine* as uninteresting in this regard, with Baron Papageno and Frau Pittelkow to uphold his theories.

In this study of technique there are unquestionably occasional lapses into platitudes and trivialities; Hayens is minded to make his study exhaustive

and, quite legitimately, has an eye to completeness even at the risk of including the petty. One interesting and characteristic element of Fontane's novels is overlooked or fails to receive due emphasis, namely, his use of the so-called "Leitmotiv," or of the foreshadowing suggestion, which is closely related to it. Hayens's attention might have been called to this rather noteworthy characteristic of Fontane's style by R. Sternfeld's essay "Das Leitmotiv bei Theodor Fontane" (*Beilage, Vossische Zeitung*, No. 343, 1910).<sup>1</sup> In several cases the investigator notes that Fontane ignores those climaxes of action which other novelists would have made the chief objects of their interest. This practice Hayens either does not interpret at all or explains unsatisfactorily; for example, in one instance, by attributing to Fontane's age his lack of interest in crises where the grand passion is involved. As a matter of fact again, these omissions indicate quite clearly certain conceptions of Fontane's as to the functions of the novel; he is not primarily concerned with great dramatic moments—that he leaves to the dramatist; he is mainly interested in processes of development which may lead up to them or result from them.

The concluding chapter will seem to most readers to be somewhat inadequate. Many general statements are scattered through the book, as it occurs to Hayens to generalize from points made with reference to a particular novel, for example, Fontane's comparative failure in depicting children; but he does not draw these fragments of a general characterization into a clear outline of his author in his final summation. Though Hayens remarks in his preface that Fontane is the chief German realist of the nineteenth century, he gives nowhere a clear conception of what he understands by realism nor how Fontane fulfils it. Hayens mentions Fontane's relationship to certain other novelists, his predecessors and contemporaries, such as Alexis, Hesekei, Mauthner, and Lindau; he comments on a possible relationship to Young Germany on the one hand and to Zola and the Naturalists on the other, but in general his references are too brief to convey a really adequate or substantiated conception of how Fontane resembled or differed from those whose themes or whose methods were such as to make a comparison with Fontane's work significant, or to show Fontane's relation to his environment and the more important literary movements of his day. A much more detailed investigation of these problems would have enhanced the value of Hayens's book. In regard to social and literary backgrounds and Fontane's relationship to them, and, indeed, concerning various points of the novelist's technique, the volumes of Fontane's correspondence afford invaluable suggestions; Hayens directs attention to Fontane's autobiographical works but he does not seem to have used the abundant testimony of the correspondence as to Fontane's own estimate of values. The

<sup>1</sup>In a paper entitled "The *Leitmotiv* in German Literature" and read by Professor E. S. Meyer before the meeting of the Modern Language Association, Philadelphia, December 28, 1912, particular emphasis was laid on Fontane's use of this device.

significance of the final chapter would be much increased by a more extended attempt to sum up Fontane's character as a novelist, his temper and personality, the ideas and conceptions of life which underlie his novels, and his relationship to his world. Some of these points are admirably covered by Wandrey in his chapter entitled "Die geistige Persönlichkeit." Hayens controls his material with considerable skill, varying the order of the different elements of his investigation and enlivening the substance with illustrations. But, it would seem, the book fails to satisfy completely either of the two classes for which such a study might seem to be designed, the real student of the technique of fiction, particularly German fiction, and the general reading public which seeks merely a second-hand acquaintance with an important foreign author. Yet, as has been suggested above, Hayens's study contains unquestionably much which is interesting and stimulating to both types of readers.

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*The Origin of the German Carnival Comedy.* BY MAXIMILIAN J. RUDWIN. New York: G. E. Stechert & Co., 1920. Pp. xii+85.

Man is forever fascinated by the search for origins. During the last half-century or so his tireless effort to penetrate into that confused labyrinth, primitive mind, has thrown much new and interesting light upon the great nucleus of all religion and art, the annual spring festival. The kernel of this universal vegetation or life-festival was everywhere the ritual celebration of the death, resurrection, and marriage of the life-dispensing Fertility-Spirit or Year-Spirit. Out of this ritual the drama developed: tragedy, as also comedy.

Since the investigations of Mannhardt, and since the application of his basic vegetation-spirit theory by Frazer in his *Golden Bough*, this connection of both tragedy and comedy with the rites and customs of the spring festival has become more and more manifest. Notwithstanding the ancestor-worship theory upheld by a few, the inclusive formulations of Jane Harrison and Gilbert Murray as regards classic tragedy, and of Cornford as regards classic comedy, are increasingly convincing.

In the discussions regarding the origin of our modern Teutonic, in particular English and German, drama, its patent association with the liturgical performances of biblical scenes in the Christian churches, and the later direct influence upon it of finished classical tragedy and comedy, have been stressed. There has as yet been no adequate realization of its still more fundamental connection with native tragic and comic forms, as determined by the native primitive spring ritual. The rapid development of the liturgical scenes into great mystery cycles played processionally, each year, by the town guilds in the town's public places, has always seemed